

# MONROE COUNTY

**Honorable William J. Causey, Jr.**

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## Council Priorities

### 1. Safety

*Educate the community about the safety hazards associated with substance abuse, especially toxic crystal methadone, and secure a grant to provide prevention and intervention services to include education of parents and teachers on the signs and symptoms of child abuse/neglect to decrease the rate county-wide.*

### 2. Health

*The rate of STD's and teen pregnancy are enormous in Monroe County.*

### 3. Parent Involvement and Skills

*There is an increased need to educate single parents on how to be better caregivers to their children physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.*

# Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

## Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

### **Need to establish a Pre-K readiness program that is state funded**

#### **Action Steps**

- 1) Secure state funding for a pre-kindergarten program for schools that serve at risk children.
- 2) Children Policy Council will continue to assist with writing grants for the development of the pre-kindergarten program.
- 3) Continue to solicit volunteers to work with the pre-kindergarten staff.

## Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

### **Economic development**

#### **Action Steps**

- 1) Secure funding to provide summer jobs for youth.
- 2) Continue to provide on the job readiness training for unemployed parents.
- 3) Strategic planning to bring more business into the county.

### **Increase community knowledge of entrepreneurs**

#### **Action Steps**

- 1) Seek training from the National Federation of Independent Business.
- 2) Partner with Chamber of Commerce to initiate a small business conference.
- 3) Partner with local banks to provide a guide/education on how to apply for business loans.

## Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

### **Difficulty with students passing the Alabama High School Graduation**

### **Exam**

#### **Action Steps**

- 1) Develop after school tutoring preparatory program.
- 2) Develop in-school preparatory program for identified students throughout the school year.
- 3) Secure funding for additional teachers to conduct the preparatory program.

## Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

### **Reduce the risk of sexually risky behavior among youth**

#### **Action Steps**

- 1) Educate youth about the ways STD's are transmitted by providing an in-school program with the health department as the information disseminator.
- 2) Secure funding for parent training on how to communicate with their children about sex, STD's, and abstinence.
- 3) Partner with local churches to provide behavior modification programs to target abstinence base programs.

### **Reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy**

#### **Action Steps**

- 1) Continue to apply for grants to target unwed teen pregnancies for male and females.
- 2) Partner with local churches to provide a teen pregnancy prevention program.
- 3) Partner with the health department to provide education about teen pregnancy.

### **Substance abuse and health disparity among youth (i.e. crystal methadone, obesity, diabetes).**

#### **Action Steps**

- 1) Partner with the health department to conduct community and school health fairs.
- 2) Partner with the mental health and the health department to provide in school substance abuse prevention and health education/nutrition classes and/or health fair.
- 3) Secure funding to assist with information dissemination of health education to youth at school, at church, and/or in the community.

## Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

### **Provide parenting programs to assist single parents with various needs**

#### **Action Steps**

- 1) Secure funding to provide constant parenting skills classes.
- 2) Provide parenting classes to children of incarcerated parents.
- 3) Provide various parenting classes that will partner with the churches to serve the parents and children.

### **Increase parental involvement with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at school**

#### **Action Steps**

- 1) Introduce local ministers to PTO and provide skill training activities for their congregation.
- 2) Provide a community information session at all local churches with school officials co-chairing the session.

## **Safety**

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

### **Educate the community about the safety hazards associated with substance abuse (especially toxic crystal methadone)**

#### **Action Steps**

- 1) Secure grants to provide education about the risk of substance abuse.
- 2) Partner with the local law enforcement officials to conduct substance abuse classes to educate youth about the danger associated with the use of drugs.
- 3) Partner with the local law enforcement to provide high school DARE mentors to elementary students.

### **Reduce the risk of children being abused and neglected**

#### **Action Steps**

- 1) Develop a working partnership with the coordinator of Homeless Children and Youth organization.
- 2) Partner with the Monroe County Department of Human Resources to train counselors and teachers to recognize the symptoms of child abuse/neglect and how to report abuse.
- 3) Train teachers how to handle a child who is a victim of child abuse/neglect in the classroom and the sensitivity needed to work with the child.

## **Policy Recommendations**

- Uniformity throughout Monroeville City Schools as it relates to student dress code policies.
- Recommend legislation provide additional funding for state pre-kindergarten programs at schools with at risk youth.
- Recommend more funding for faith-based initiatives.
- Funding for a Drug Task Force in Monroe County to combat the increased problems with crystal methadone.
- Increased funding on the state level to educate and prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases to include teen pregnancy.
- Recommend legislation provide more funding for homeless children and youth programs.
- Funding for transportation for poor rural counties.
- Additional training for Juvenile Court employees.
- Additional training for the Department of Human Resources.
- More funding provided for recreation/sports in rural areas.